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UNCLAS YEREVAN 001341

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR EUR/CACEN; DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: FURTHER DELAYS FOR AMENDMENTS TO ALTERNATIVE  
MILITARY SERVICE LAW

REFS: YEREVAN 001268

11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

12. (SBU) This message updates reftel. A National Assembly committee expert who worked on Armenia's alternative military service law previously informed Post that amendments to the law on alternative military service would be completed during the spring legislative session or completed during an extraordinary session this summer. However, the same source informed Post June 14 that, with only a few days left in the current legislative session, the amendments would not be discussed as part of this session's agenda. He blamed the delay on the Ministry of Defense for not returning the amendments to the National Assembly in time with the Ministry's approval and comments.

13. (SBU) Comment. The original alternative military service legislation took effect June 1 and was to apply to the Fall 2004 draft. Post does not believe that implementation procedures can be ready by that time. Coordination between the Ministry of Defense and the National Assembly is at best a complicated bureaucratic process, and both sides appear unhurried to implement alternative military service provisions. Post believes the law cannot realistically be implemented for new draftees before Spring 2005. In the meantime, GOAM officials have given no tentative dates for the release of 23 conscientious objectors, currently in detention, who are affected by the new legislation. End comment  
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